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The famous and Memorable

1078. 19
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HISTORY

OF THE

Battle on Chevy-Chace,

Between Earl **PIERCY**, with fifteen hundred English,
and Earl **DOUGLAS**, with two thousand Scots; in
which both these Earls, and most of their men were
slain.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

An old Ballad on the same Subject.

Embellished with beautiful Engravings of the most re-
markable Incidents in this important History.



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preparation of this work.

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HISTORY

Battle on Chevy-Chace.

CHAP. I.

*How the Piercies got their name; and to be
Earls of Northumberland; and of the war
which the Earl, in the Reign of Henry
II. made to hunt on Chevy-Chace.*

THE noble family of the Piercies,
Earls of Northumberland, has al-
ways been highly esteemed amongst the
English nobility, I might give a long
account of the descent of that noble Earl
who is a chief part of the subject of the
following story, but let this suffice, that
he was grandson to a valiant knight
who killed a king of Scotland, at the
siege of Roxburgh Castle, by running
a spear into his eye. For which service

his name was changed to Piercy or Pierce-eye.

The Earl, his grandson, taking his progress, attended by 1500 stout archers, passing on to the marches of Scotland, he was informed that in the forest beyond the Tweed called Chevy-chace, belonging to Earl Douglas, there was such fine venison as was not to be equalled in the kingdom, and provisions being scarce on the English side, the archers desired leave to go out in parties, and bring away as much as they could undiscovered; but he told them, if their courage was but sufficient to venture for it fairly, he would go with them, and it should be brought off with honour, as a lawful prize taken in an enemy's country. To this motion of the Earl's they all gave consent, and he made a vow that for three days he would take his pleasure in hunting on Chevy-chace; then he sent for dogs and toils, and early on a midsummer morning they all crossed the Tweed. When they arrived at the place, the dogs were put in to rouse the harts: but the huntsmen's shouts and the sound of their horns caused the villagers to think it

was the voice of war on some sudden invasion, so that several hid themselves, and many fled to alarm the country.

CHAP. II.

Of their killing many deers; and receiving a message from Douglas at supper-time, commanding them to depart.

THE harts and roes, tho' swift as the wind, could not outstrip the English arrows, our archers laying hundreds of them dead, till they had got such store of vention that they doubted how to carry it off—yet having refreshed themselves, they found the quantity much lessened.

While the Earl was at supper at a table made upon the grass, and seated on turfs, when he was about to give orders to his huntsmen to pursue the same sport the next morning, a messenger appeared in a scarlet livery. On which the Earl demanded from what place he came, and what his business was? To which questions he most haughtily replied:

Sir, whatever you are, my master, the noble Earl Douglas, chief ranger to the king of Scotland, to whom all these parks and chaces belong, hearing you have presumed to enter them and destroy his deer, by me tells you, that if you do not all suddenly depart, your lives shall pay for the injuries you have done, before to-morrow noon.

This being said, he was about to depart; but Earl Piercy taking him by the sleeve, said, It is but right that you should carry back an answer to your great lord—Tell him that my name is Piercy, a name at which all Scotland has trembled; and that I purpose to take my pleasure in these woods and chaces for two days longer; and if he is valiant, let him interrupt my sport at the hazard of his life.

Upon this the messenger departed to go to the Scotch Earl, and relate what was given him in charge by Earl Piercy—At which the Scotsman stormed and fretted, and walking up and down in great fury.

He enquired the number of the English, but the messenger could not give him a certain account, he only guessed there might be about ten or twelve hundred men. Whereupon he ordered his men, and his armour, which was gilded with gold, to be got ready against morning, also all his friends and servants, together, with as many as made up full two thousand men.





CHAP. III.

Of Earl Piercy's second day's sport: and his conduct on hearing of Douglai's approach.

THE Earl of Northumberland relying on his men's courage, who were the best archers in England, was so far from being daunted that he ordered the tables to be spread again, and great store of wine was drank to the prosperity of their sport.

The sun no sooner gilded the horizon than the sport was renewed, and the woods resounded with the pleasing noise. That morning they killed the most stately hart ever seen. Then the Earl turning to one of his knights, said, The

time draws near when, if Earl Douglas keeps his word, we shall have another kind of sport, therefore let us carefully keep our men together, for man to man, I fear not any nation under heaven; but, if I thought he would not come, we would remove to the next forest, for whether I perceive the deer have fled.

He had no sooner uttered these words, than Witherington came up to him, saying, My Lord, cause the dogs to be called off, and muster up your forces, for on the top of yonder hill I see Douglas coming towards you with upwards of 2000 spearmen. I thank thee, replied the Earl, and doubt not thy courage. Then



Witherington, bowing, said, I do not doubt so to behave myself this day, as, with the rest of your men, to be remembered in the most distant ages.

Immediately the horns sounded a retreat, the dogs were called off, and the archers mustered about their leader, who raised up their courage with the following oration.

My renowned countrymen, it was by your consent that we passed over the Tweed for recreation, which is soon likely to be disturbed——Earl Douglas has sent me a challenge; he is going to give us battle, or make us fly over the Tweed. Remember that you are Englishmen, and that Piercy is at your head. Be courageous; and, for the honour of our king and country gain such lasting fame, as shall not die but with time.

Having said thus much, they all shouted, and immediately fell into order, some pruning their arrows, and others new stringing their bows, which were made of trusty steel.



CHAP. IV.

Of the meeting of the two Earls; their proposal to decide the quarrel in single combat; with Witherington's objection.

THE English archers were scarcely in readiness when Earl Douglas appeared on the top of the hill, mounted on a milk white steed, and his men ranged in order behind him.—Earl Piercy taking a staff in his hand, and a sword by his side, caused his men to move forward and to meet Earl Douglas, who being come within forty paces, demanded whose men they were that durst presume to hunt in his forest, and to kill his deer: whoever they were they must expect to be severely punished: and commanded them to yield immediately if they expected mercy.—The English Earl replied, It matters not whose men we are; but what we have done we will justify, and what deer we have killed we will carry away, or die upon the spot.

This spoken with such courage made Douglas something calmer—O, said he, I know thee, Piercy, thou art an Earl as well as I; therefore, if thou art as

brave as some reports thee, let thou
and I decide it.

This offer pleased Piercy, who draw-
ing his sword, bade defiance to the chal-
lenger, and they were going to engage,
when Witherington thus addressed him-
self to Piercy: My lord, heaven forbid
that I and the rest of your servants
should stand idle while you are engag-
ed; permit therefore, my good lord,
that we all partake in this day's glory.

Hereupon the English shouted all
the engagement became general.



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CHAP. V.

Of the long continuance of the battle, and the death of both Earls.

THE English archers in the left division immediately sent a flight of arrows, which laid sixty of the Scots dead; and the right division letting fly on the flank of their battalion, gauled them most miserably. Earl Douglas seeing his men discouraged, ordered them to advance, and come to a close fight whereby he intended to make the English bows useless. But he was mistaken, for whenever the front opened, the archers plied the Scots with their arrows, while the others kept them in play with their swords, insomuch that the ground was covered with their dead bodies.

And Earl Piercy, accompanied by divers knights, broke in among them with such fury, that he laid heaps of dead before him, so that Earl Douglas, who was fighting valiantly on the other side, was obliged to come and rally his broken forces. The two Earls met like enraged lions, no armour was proof against their well tempered swords. But at length Earl Douglas began to

faint, when he thus bespoke Earl Piercy,
Noble Lord, you see your blood begins
to flow fast, and death you cannot es-
cape if you contend with me any longer:
I therefore would have you yield your-
self my prisoner; you shall be nobly
used; and I'll prefer you to serve my
king. — To this Piercy replied, As for
my life take you no care, but rather
guard your own; my honour I prefer
before any thing, and it never shall be
said that Piercy yielded to a Scot.

Whilst they paused a little, an arrow
from the ranks of the English archers
pierced the valiant Douglas to the heart,
whose last words were these: Fight on,
my merry men, revenge my death, for
I am slain, and Lord Piercy lives to see
my fall.

Earl Piercy mourned Earl Douglas's
death, as one glorious hero ever mourns
another. But while he stood near the
body, Sir Hugh Montgomery, a valiant
Scotch knight, pierced him to the heart.
Witherington perceiving this, vowed re-
venge, and killed Montgomery with a
broad-sword. But himself did not long
survive, for a Scot, with an arrow, put
an end to his life.



An excellent old Ballad describing the woeful
Hunting on CHEVY CHASE; and the
bloody fight between the Earls, Piercy and
Douglas.

GOD preserve long our noble king,

Our lives and safeties all,

A woeful hunting once there did

In Chevy Chase befall.

To drive the deer with hound and horn,

Earl Piercy took his way:

The child may see that is unborn,

The hunting of that day,

The Stout Earl of Northumberland,

A vow to God did make,

His pleasures in the Scottish woods
 Three summer's days to take;
 The chiefest harts in Chevy-chace
 To kill and bear away;
 The tidings to Earl Douglas came,
 In Scotland where he lay;
 Who sent Earl Piercy present word
 He would prevent his sport;
 The English Earl not fearing this,
 Did to the woods resort,
 With fifteen hundred bowmen bold,
 All chosen men of might,
 Who new full well in time of need,
 To aim their shafts aright.
 The greyhounds swiftly ran
 To chase the fallow deer;
 On Monday they began to hunt,
 When day-light did appear,
 And long before high noon they had
 A hundred fat bucks slain:
 They having din'd, the drovers went
 To rouse them up again;
 The bowmen muster'd on the hill,
 Well able to endure,
 Their backsides all with special care,
 That day were guarded sure.
 The hounds ran swiftly through the woods,
 The nimble deer to take,
 And, with their cries, the hills and dales
 An echo shrill did make.
 Lord Piercy to the quarry went,
 To view the tender deer,
 Quoth he, the Earl Douglas promised
 This day to meet me here;
 That I thought he would not come,
 No longer would I stay.

Then stept a brave young gentleman,
 And to the Earl did say :
 Lo ! yonder doth Earl Douglas come,
 His men of armour bright ;
 Full twenty hundred Scottish spears,
 All marching in our sight,
 All men of pleasant Tiviotdale,
 Fast by the river Tweed.
 Then cease your sport, Earl Percy said,
 And take your bows with speed :
 And now with me, my countrymen,
 Your courage forth advance,
 For never was there champion yet,
 In Scotland, or in France.
 That ever did on horseback come,
 But if my hap it were,
 I durst encounter man for man,
 With him to break a spear.
 Earl Douglas on a milk white steed,
 Much like a baron bold,
 Rode foremost of his company,
 Whose armour shone like gold :
 Shew me, said he, whose men you be,
 That hunt so boldly here ;
 And without my consent, dare chase
 And kill my fallow deer ?
 The first that did an answer make,
 Was noble Percy, he
 Did say, we list not to declare,
 Or shew whose men we be ;
 Yet we will spend our dearest blood,
 The chiefest harts to slay.
 Then Douglas swore a solemn oath,
 And thus in a rage did say ;
 Before I will out-braved be,
 One of us two shall die ;

I know thee well, an Earl thou art,
 Lord Piercy, so am I;
 But trust me, Piercy, I think it were
 A great offence to kill
 Any of these harmless men;
 For they have done no ill;
 Let thou and I the battle try,
 And set our men aside.
 Accurst be he, Lord Piercy said,
 By whom this is deny'd.
 Then stept a gallant squire forth,
 Witherington by name,
 Who said, I would not have it told
 To Henry, our king, for shame,
 That e'er my captain fought on foot,
 And I stood looking on:
 You are two Earls, said Witherington,
 And I a squire alone;
 I'll do the best that do I may,
 While I have power to stand;
 While I have strength to wield my sword,
 I'll fight with heart and hand.
 Our English archers bent their bows,
 Their hearts were good and true:
 At the first sight of arrows sent,
 Full threescore Scots they slew.
 To drive the deer with hound and horn,
 Earl Douglas had been bent;
 The captains, mov'd with muckle pride,
 Their spears to shivets sent.
 They clos'd full fast on every side,
 No slackness there was found,
 Whilst many a gallant gentleman
 Lay gasping on the ground.
 Oh, Christ! it was a grief to see,
 And likewise for to hear,

The groans of men lying in their gore,
 And scatter'd here and there;
 At last these two Earls did meet,
 Like captains of great might,
 Like lions mov'd they laid on blows,
 And made a bloody fight;



They fought until they both did sweat,
 With swords of temper'd steel,
 Until the blood like drops of rain,
 They tickling down did feel;
 Yield thee, Earl Piercy, Douglas said,
 In faith I will thee bring
 Where thou shalt high advanced be,
 By James our Scottish king.
 Thy ransom I will freely give,
 And thus report of thee,
 Thou art the most courageous knight,
 That ever I did see.
 To the Earl Douglas Piercy said,
 Thy proffers I do scorn.

I will not yield to any Scot
 That ever yet was born
 With that there came a narrow keen-ed bow
 Out of an English bow,
 Which struck Earl Douglas to the heart,
 A deep and deadly blow,
 Who never spoke more words than these
 Fight on, my metry men all,
 For now my life is at an end,
 Lord Piercy sees my fall
 Then leaving life, Earl Piercy took
 The dead man by the hand,
 And said, Earl Douglas, for thy sake
 Would I have lost my head,
 O Christ! my very heart doth bleed
 With sorrow for thy sake,
 For sure a more renowned knight
 Mischance did never take
 A knight among the Scots there was
 Who saw Earl Douglas die,
 And straight in wrath did vow revenge
 Upon the Lord Piercy
 Sir Hugh Montgomery he was call'd,
 Who with a spear most bright
 Well mounted on a gallant steed,
 Rode fiercely through the fight,
 He pass'd our English archers all,
 Without either dread or fear,
 And through Earl Piercy's body then,
 He thrust the hateful spear,
 With such vehement force and might,
 He did his body gore,
 The spear went through the other side,
 A full cloth yard, and more,
 So did both these nobles die,
 Whose courage none could stain

An English archer then perceiv'd
 The noble Earl was slain,
 He had a bow bent in his hands,
 Made of a trusty yew,
 An arrow of a cloth-yard long,
 Unto his head he drew,
 Against Sir Hugh Montgomery
 Aright and shaft he set;
 The gray goose wing that was thereon,
 In his heart's blood was wet.
 This fight did last from break of day,
 Till setting of the sun,
 For when they rung the evening bell,
 The battle scarce was done.
 With Earl Piercy there was slain,
 Sir John of Orgeton;
 Sir Robert Ratcliff, and Sir John,
 Sir James, that bold barron;
 With good Sir John, and good Sir James,
 Both knights of good account;
 Good Sir Ralph Rabbitt there was slain,
 Whose powers did surmount;
 For Witherington needs must I wail,
 As one of the doleful damps,
 For when his legs were smitten off,
 He fought upon his stumps;
 And, with Earl Douglas there was slain,
 Sir Hugh Montgomery;
 Sir Charles Currel that from the field,
 One foot would never flee;
 Sir Charles Currel that of Ratcliff, too,
 His sister's son was he;
 Sir David Lamb, tho' so esteem'd,
 They saved could not be.
 And the Lord Maxwell, he likewise,
 Did with Earl Douglas die.

Of twenty hundred Scottish peers
 Went home but fifty-three;
 The rest were slain in Chevy Chase,
 Under the green-wood tree.
 Next day did many widows come,
 Their husbands to bewail;
 They wash'd their wounds in briny tears,
 Yet all would not prevail;
 Their bodies bath'd in purple gore,
 With them they bore away;
 And kiss'd them dead a thousand times,
 When they were cold as clay.
 The news was brought to Edinburgh,
 Where Scotland's king did reign,
 That the Earl Douglas, suddenly,
 Was with an arrow slain.
 Oh ! heavy news, king James did say,
 Scotland can witness be,
 I have not any captain more,
 Of such account as he.
 Like tidings to King Henry came,
 Within a little space,
 That Percy of Northumberland,
 Was slain in Chevy Chase;
 Then God be with him, said the king,
 Sith 'twill no better be,
 I trust I have within my realm,
 Five hundred good as he;
 Yet shall no Scot, nor Scotland say,
 But I will vengeance take,
 And be revenged on them;
 For my Lord Percy's sake;
 This vow the king full-well perform'd
 After, at Thumbledown;
 Where fifty Scottish Earls were slain,
 With men of great renown;

And of the rest of small account,
 Did many thousands die;
 Thus ended the huping on Chery Chace,
 Made by the Lord Percy,
 God save the king, and bless his land,
 In plenty, joy, and peace,
 And grant henceforth, that foul debate
 Twixt noblemen may cease.

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